

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Department of Employment Services

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Claimants

Q: How do I file an Unemployment Insurance claim with the District of Columbia?

A: District of Columbia Unemployment Insurance claims for benefits can be filed online, by phone, or in person:

ONLINE: does.dcnetworks.org or at ui.dc.gov

BY PHONE: (202) 724-7000

IN PERSON: District of Columbia American Job Centers

Q: Who can receive Unemployment Insurance benefits in the District of Columbia?

A: Any worker who is unemployed or who is working less than full-time may file a claim for Unemployment Insurance benefits. Claim applications may be filed online, over the phone or at any American Job Center located in the District of Columbia. A full listing of the American Job Centers' locations can be found at <http://www.dcnetworks.org>.

Initial claims against the District of Columbia may also be filed at a State Workforce Agency in any of the 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. These are called "interstate" claims. An example of an interstate claimant would be an individual who relocated to the state of New York after being laid off from employment in the District of Columbia. That individual would file an unemployment claim against the District of Columbia through a State Workforce Agency in the state of New York or via the Internet at <http://www.dcnetworks.org/> or ui.dc.gov.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for Unemployment Insurance benefits in the District of Columbia?

A: To be eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits, an individual must meet the following wage requirements:

- Wages must be reported in at least two quarters of the base period;
- At least \$1,300 in wages must be reported in one quarter of the base period;
- At least \$1,950 in wages must be reported for the entire base period; and
- Total base period wages must be at least 1.5 times the wages in the highest quarter or be within \$70 of that amount. For example, an individual has total base period wages of \$5,000, with \$3,500 in the highest quarter and \$500 in each of the other three quarters. This individual would not be eligible, because total base period wages of \$5,000 is not at least 1.5 times the wages in the high quarter ($1.5 \times \$3,500 = \$5,250$), nor is it within \$70 of that amount.

In addition to wage requirements, claimants must also meet the following requirements:

- Unemployed through no fault of their own.
- Available for work; i.e., ready and willing to accept work considered suitable because of past training, education, or experience.
- Physically able to work; claimants may not collect benefits while sick, injured or disabled.
- Actively seeking work, using methods that are customary for the occupation. Periodically, claimant may be required to report to an American Job Center to demonstrate work search activities.
- Not receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits from another state.

Q: What is the “base period”?

A: The base period is a 12-month period that is determined by the date the claim is filed. The wage calculation used to determine the base period is defined as traditional and alternative. All claims are initially computed for monetary eligibility using the traditional base period. The traditional base period uses the first four (4) of the last five (5) completed calendar quarters immediately preceding the effective date a claim is filed. If a claim fails to meet the monetary wage requirement to establish a traditional base period claim, an alternative base period calculation is used. An alternative base period calculation uses the last four (4) completed calendar quarters immediately preceding the effective date claim is filed. If neither base period calculation meets the wage requirements to establish a weekly benefit amount, a claim cannot be processed.

Q: What information do I need to have available before I file for Unemployment Insurance benefits with the District of Columbia?

A: To begin the process to file for DC unemployment benefits, you will need the following information:

- Social security number;
- Most recent employer’s name, address, telephone number and dates of employment;
- Alien Registration Number if you are not a US Citizen;
- DD-214 Member Copy 4 if you are Ex-Military;
- Standard Form 8 or Standard Form 50 if you are a former federal employee;
- Severance Pay Information (only applicable if you did or will receive severance pay).

Q: Why have I been disqualified or held ineligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits?

A: Claimants may be disqualified from receiving benefits or held ineligible for any of the following reasons:

- Voluntarily leaving their last (30-day) employer without good cause connected with the work;
- Being discharged by their last employer for gross misconduct that is supported by evidence;
- Being discharged by their last employer for other than gross misconduct;

- Refusing to apply for or accept suitable work without good cause;
- Participating in a labor dispute other than a lockout;
- Being physically unable to work or unavailable for work;
- Failing to report as directed;
- Failing to attend a training course recommended by the Department of Employment Services (DOES);
- Lacking authorization to work in the United States;
- Having reasonable assurance of continuing employment, where the employer is an academic institution or a sports team.

Q: Will I still receive benefits if my employer files an appeal of my Unemployment Insurance claim?

A: If you were determined eligible for benefits, you will continue to receive your benefits as long as you meet all other requirements. If the decision is in favor of the employer, you may be required to repay all or part of the unemployment insurance benefits that have been paid to you.

Q: What happens if I receive an Unemployment Insurance benefit overpayment, or certify for benefits that I am not entitled to?

A: If claimants are determined to have received benefits to which they are not entitled, they will receive a written notice that explains the amount overpaid and the reason for the overpayment. Individuals who are overpaid are liable for full repayment to the state. Repayment may be made either in a lump sum or in agreed upon installments. Future unemployment benefits due may also be withheld to satisfy outstanding overpayments. If repayment is not made, legal action will be taken to collect the overpayment.

Some of the most common reasons for overpayments are the following:

- Failure to report earnings;
- Incorrectly reporting earnings, for example, net earnings, instead of gross earnings;
- Failure to report pensions;
- Back-Pay Award (if claimants have been restored to work with back pay, they are overpaid for the weeks for which they received unemployment benefits); If an employer makes a back-pay award to a claimant who has received benefits during the same period covered by the back-pay award, the employer is required by law to withhold from the back-pay award in an amount equal to the benefits paid. For the amount of benefits received or payment information, contact the Benefit Payment Control Unit at (202) 698-5111;
- A decision by an Appeals Examiner or the Office Administrative Hearings (OAH) which overturns an earlier ruling that claimants were entitled to benefits;

- Continuing to file for Unemployment Insurance benefits after a return to full-time work.

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